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**COMMUNISM AND RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES**

By

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"No clergyman should in any way identify himself with communism."

--J. Edgar Hoover

### Introduction

It is especially fitting to discuss the subject of "Communism and Religion" before an audience composed of Methodists. This is true because John Wesley, like Karl Marx, related his thinking primarily toward the toiling, struggling, suffering people and their problems. And both men advocated revolution. Here the parallel ends, for John Wesley was a devout man of God, while Marx was a militant atheist.

Wesley called for a revolution of the spirit; Marx called for a revolution of the sword. Wesley appealed to the soul of man; Marx to his body. Wesley would change and improve the social structures by changing and improving men, elevating them to an effective relationship with God. This, he believed, would imbue them with a social consciousness and a sense of responsibility for the personal and group welfare of their fellow men. Wesley's motivation was one of love; Marx' one of hatred.

The subject matter of these two men was identical--humanity. But their interpretation and treatment of this subject matter were entirely different. Their philosophical perspectives were diametrically opposed to each other. As powerful historical characters, they are natural rivals. Therefore, it was no accident that the French historian Elie Halvey posed this provocative question: "A century earlier, John Wesley had defeated Voltaire. Would he defeat Karl Marx?" In the broader context, we can paraphrase this question to read: "Twenty centuries ago, Jesus Christ defeated the ancient pagans. Will He defeat the modern communists?"

It is to this question that we shall address ourselves. It is this question around which truly burning issues cluster today, issues which are dividing religious people and weakening the social fabric of our Nation at a time when it needs to be strong. There is general agreement that Christ can overcome the modern communists, but there are countless particular disagreements on almost every aspect of the subject. Can these differences be resolved and a workable national unity effected? Can the freedom we enjoy be voluntarily turned away from divisive activities and into creative, constructive channels of united action for our national principles, traditions, values, and historic objectives?



Writing in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin for April, 1961,  
J. Edgar Hoover said:

"There exists today in our land a vital 'rift' which the communists are exploiting. Unfortunately, this involves certain people across the country who engage in reckless charges against one another. The label of 'communist' is too often indiscriminately attached to those whose views differ from the majority. Those whose lives are not led according to what one segment of society might decree to be the 'norm' are too frequently challenged as 'Reds.'"

This rift or division to which Mr. Hoover refers--and which American communists are skillfully exploiting--exists not only in secular areas but also in the field of religion. This is indeed unfortunate because it occurs at a stage in history when the United States for the first time is confronted with a total challenge. Communism challenges our entire body of thought and practices--political, economic, educational, psychological, scientific, philosophical, and religious. Communism charges that our entire social structure and the culture emanating from it are contrary and inimical to the nature and welfare of man; hence, it must and will be torn up by the roots, wholly obliterated, and replaced by communism.

In the light of this formidable challenge, the need for national unity is obvious. There is a need to be united not only on what we are against--communism--but, even more important, on what we are for. And, what we are for is freedom under law--freedom of thought, expression, action, dissent, experimentation, education, and worship. It is only this freedom which can give actual meaning to those universal and unalienable rights of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" for every person irrespective of race, color, creed, economic worth, or social prestige.

#### Allegations of Communist Infiltration of Churches

One major dividing factor in the field of religion today relates to allegations of communist infiltration of our churches. A sustained public controversy--often heated and bitter--has raged in this country in recent years over the question of communism and religion. Many sensational and sweeping accusations and indictments have been made concerning the alleged widespread communist penetration of and influence in the churches of America.



All sorts of vague and nebulous terms of opprobrium have been used to describe the political complexions and affiliations of various clergymen and religious bodies--Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish.

Protestants in particular have been singled out by critics, mainly within their own ranks, as being especially susceptible to communist appeals and tactics. It has been charged that the most sizable single body giving support to the American communist movement is comprised of Protestant clergymen. Additionally, it has been said that, of all the Protestant denominations, Methodists have been the most extensively infiltrated by communists.

These allegations are serious and disturbing to many. During the course of this lecture, I will endeavor to explore with you the basis for these allegations and indicate whether or not they have any validity. Further, in keeping with your theme "What One Man Can Do," I shall suggest for your consideration certain constructive steps which can be taken by every citizen in any local community. To begin with, however, an account of the communist position on religion will be discussed to serve as a backdrop and also to make mutually clear that there is no common ground whatsoever on which communists and religious men can stand. Further, examples will be given of communist activities in relation to clergymen.

#### Basic Communist Antagonism toward Religion

Karl Marx, the founder of communism, wrote 117 years ago:

"... Religion is the moan of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

"The abolition of religion, as the illusory happiness of the people, is the demand for the real happiness...."

Communists explain religion as merely a mass of age-old superstitions engendered in the dim, distant past when people were overawed by elemental and natural forms and phenomena. According to communists, as religion developed it gradually became a part of the superstructure resting on economics. Subsequently, it served as an instrument of the ruling and exploiting classes. It is still used, communists maintain, by "predatory capitalists" to hold the masses in abject subjugation. Hence, communists contend that religion merely serves, as Marx put it, as the opium of the people, since it alienates man from his true self, a materialistic being.



Communists completely reject a belief in God, in morals derived from religious principles, and in the immortality of the soul. Communism is based on dialectical and historical materialism, which arbitrarily excludes all convictions based on faith in God and the theistic interpretation of life.

The modern communist theory of dialectical and historical materialism, which debars any religious concept, was succinctly enunciated in 1848 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their Communist Manifesto, the bible of world communism. On the subject of religion, the Manifesto holds that (1) no supernatural moral laws, such as the Judaeo-Christian moral code, are to interfere with the world-wide communist revolution, since communist morality must be based on nonclass, nonsupernatural principles rooted in proletarian utility; and (2) all religions are, without exception, false and harmful and must necessarily be eliminated, as they delay the revolution.

From Karl Marx to the present day, communist leaders have echoed the antireligious concept of communist ideology and attacked all religion, its works, and its institutions. They have done so with the single purpose of eradicating religious belief and replacing it with worship of the communist state under the domination of one monolithic, dictatorial communist party.

V. I. Lenin, the principal architect of modern communism, said:

"... Religion is the opium of the people. Religion is a kind of spiritual gin in which the slaves of capital drown their human shape and their claims to any decent human life. "

Several years ago, Nikita S. Khrushchev stated:

"We remain atheists. We will do all we can to liberate a certain portion of the people from the charm of the religious opium that still exists. . . . "

As recently as September 20, 1961, Khrushchev also said: "As a Communist and an atheist I do not believe in the Lord's will. "

Communism is the antithesis of religion, being irrevocably opposed to religion both on philosophical and practical grounds, as shown in an extract from a recent Soviet publication:

"... The philosophical basis of Marxism is dialectical materialism--materialism, which is fundamentally



opposed to all religion. The Communist Party, basing its activity on dialectical materialism, wages a consistent and implacable struggle against religion. "

"Religion is an ideological foe of communism, and the reconciliation of the two is impossible. "

Communism simply cannot tolerate freedom of religion and all that it means. No communist government can allow allegiance to any authority but its own, whether that authority be a Supreme Being, a code of ethics, a body of political and social principles, or merely an individual's respect for his own mind and conscience. To tolerate two authorities would lead to a freedom of choice for citizens, and citizens who are free to choose would be unreliable by communist standards.

As previously stated, communist morality is rooted in a total renunciation of a belief in God and the values of the Judaeo-Christian moral code. Communists subordinate all morality to the class struggle. To them, anything is moral which is related to the revolutionary struggle and which tends to destroy the enemy and to promote communism. Lenin was most explicit when he said: "We repudiate all morality that is taken outside of human, class concepts. " "Morality is that which serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new Communist society. " This position is, of course, based upon the communist concept that reality itself is revolutionary.

One of the principal reasons why communists so persistently and vehemently condemn religion is that they claim it undermines the "revolutionary zeal" of workers and detracts from the militant class struggle. According to an excerpt from Pravda, a Soviet newspaper:

"... Religion, with its antiscientific affirmations, its morality and its distorted concepts of the surrounding world, handicaps the construction of communism and diverts some people from vigorous participation in our great work. The residues of religious holdovers are an obstacle in strengthening the friendship of peoples and are conducive to the retention of bourgeois nationalistic sentiments. In a number of instances the performance of religious rituals entails a breach of labor and state discipline, is injurious to the national economy. . . "



Communist hostility toward religion is deep-seated and manifests itself against all religious beliefs and all forms of worship, whether they be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or any other. In both theory and practice, communists make no distinction whatever between various religious creeds. This fact is shown in the following passages from a book entitled Religion in the USSR, written some years ago by the president of the League of Militant Atheists of the Soviet Union:

"...the Jewish rabbi, the Roman Catholic priest, the Russian Orthodox priest, the Mohammedan mullah, the Evangelist, Baptist and other ministers of religion, each has his own way of fooling the people."

"All religious organizations, including all sectarian organizations, oppose the correct conception of the world, based upon science...and cling to their incorrect ideas, which are based on faith alone... As to differences between one religion and another, they are of little, if any, consequence...."

All forms of Christianity are especially disparaged and denounced by communists. They reject completely all Christian principles. They deny Christian contributions to Western civilization and to world progress. Some communists even discount the historical character of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, maintaining that it is not important whether or not the Hebrew prophets and Jesus actually existed.

Communists charge that Christianity merely preaches--but fails to act--against poverty, social injustice, racial discrimination, and neglect of the sick and aged; that it has invariably resisted social and economic reform in favor of the status quo; that it is allied with, and subsidized by, the most reactionary elements of society. Communists, therefore, look upon Christianity as a powerful political enemy:

"...The churches have always used their influence and resources to maintain reactionary rulers in power.... In all capitalist countries the workers...find the churches directly and indirectly aiding the capitalist rulers.



"The doctrines and ritual of the churches are powerful means of developing attitudes of subservience among the workers...."

"...A supernatural power is pictured that will punish workers if they disobey the rules of order and self-respect which their rulers have established to keep them docile and obedient. Capitalism and its laws and practices are taught to be god-given creations; it becomes irreligious and wicked to challenge them."

#### American Communist Leaders Also Antireligious

The Communist Party in the United States, which is an integral part of the international communist movement, has, as a matter of course, slavishly subscribed and adhered to all communist tenets and practices. Over the years, the Communist Party in this country has dutifully embraced and reflected communism's antireligious concept and tone. Earl Browder and William Z. Foster, both of whom have headed the Communist Party, USA, considered communism to be the ideological foe of religion. Earl Browder made this unmistakably plain when he said:

"The Communist Party takes the position that the social function of religion and religious institutions is to act as an opiate to keep the lower classes passive, to make them accept the bad conditions under which they have to live in the hope of a reward after death. From this estimate of the social role of religion it is quite clear that the Communist Party is the enemy of religion...."

William Z. Foster, who died in the Soviet Union in September, 1961, voiced the same sentiments:

"...In this era of growing science and industrialization, and of developing dialectical materialism, religious mysteries and metaphysics are quite out of place. We are well into the period of all-embracing realism in which religion plays no living role. It will not be very long before man, completely emancipated mentally



from superstition in all of its forms, will marvel as to how and why humanity was able to accept and to tolerate intellectually for all these ages, the rational impossibilities of religion. "

### Early Militant Communist Hostility toward Religion

The Communist Party, USA, was formed in September, 1919, two years after the Russian Revolution. In the 1920's, the American Communist Party militantly preached atheism and exhibited nothing but hostility, contempt, and ridicule toward religion, its institutions, and its practitioners.

A writer in The Worker, the Party's organ, characterized the church as "one of the props of the capitalist system," and stated that it was "necessary to expose it as such and thus rob it of a great deal of its ability to confuse and mislead the workers." Young Worker, a publication of the main communist youth group in the 1920's, informed its readers that "the staunchest and most servile valets of the ruling class are found in the robes of the church, no matter what its denomination may be." The Daily Worker, another Party publication, once caustically referred to the Bible as "the most vile, filthy and obscene book published in any language. "

Religion and its institutions continued to be subjected to sharp and ruthless communist attack in the early 1930's. Religion was still bitterly condemned as an agency by which the capitalist class enforced its hold and control over the people. "In the United States, as in all capitalist countries," one communist author wrote, "the churches, by developing law-abiding attitudes through their appeal to fear of an avenging god, become part of the repressive apparatus, equally with the police, the army, and the prisons, for the purpose of attempting to prevent rebellion and keep the masses in subjugation. "

### The Question

In view of this crystal-clear, acrimonious, and militant communist opposition to all religions, why have some American clergymen during the past 42 years joined the Communist Party, affiliated themselves with communist front organizations, signed communist petitions and resolutions, contributed money to communist causes, and in other diverse ways aided the communist movement? To deal with this question requires a brief review of communist tactics. Take, for example, the tactic of the "outstretched hand. "



Communist tactics underwent a sudden change in the middle 1930's. In the preceding decade and a half, as we have just seen, the American communist movement openly and loudly proclaimed communism's antireligious and atheistic beliefs. But about 1935, the rise of fascism caused an abrupt switch in communist tactics. Communists clearly recognized that the new menace threatened the Soviet Union and thereupon quickly formulated a new united-front tactic in an effort to combat it. On orders from Moscow, communists throughout the world were instructed to seek and enlist the cooperation of any and all other organizations--including religious groups--in the struggle against fascism.

In following the new Soviet line, the Communist Party, USA, took steps to prevent further alienation of the Communist Party from religious groups in this country. Communists soft-pedaled their former antireligious sentiments and adopted the policy of the "outstretched hand," which actually was nothing more than a tactical maneuver under which communism's implacable hostility toward religion was concealed in order to deceive and use clergymen to further immediate communist objectives.

In recent years, the Communist Party, USA, has reaffirmed its "outstretched hand" policy toward religion, declaring that it "seeks no conflict with any church or any American's religious belief. On the contrary, we stretch out our hand in the fellowship of common struggle for our mutual goal of peace, democracy and security to all, regardless of religious belief."

It must be reiterated and emphasized, however, that while American communists have assumed a seemingly more tolerant attitude toward religion, they have in no way abandoned their ideological commitment to destroy it. For example, there is being used by the Communist Party, USA, today a manual entitled Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, issued in the recent past by the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow. It is a comprehensive manual of communist doctrine, strategy, and tactics for the use of communist parties throughout the world. This manual militantly propounds atheism, claiming that "man is only a particle of multiform nature," and "materialistic philosophy" must be used as a "weapon" against those who hold a religious viewpoint of life. Can the inherent hypocrisy and deceit of communists be any more apparent than this?



### Religion a Continuing Target of Communist Penetration

Today, communists continue to make American religious leaders and institutions a prime target for penetration. Communists seek to exploit the church for their own ends whenever possible by endeavoring to depict a mutuality of interest and agreement on such issues as peace, civil liberties, racial discrimination, social and economic reform, et cetera.

Communists are ever ready to endorse and support the programs and activities of noncommunist organizations--including churches and religious groups--when they coincide with the aims of the Communist Party. In this way, communists seek to strengthen their claim that the Communist Party, in keeping with respected and patriotic noncommunist organizations, shares the best interests and welfare of the American people.

Thus, the Communist Party can be said to have several objectives in its efforts to infiltrate religious groups in the United States:

1. To increase the sphere of the Party's contacts among noncommunist church members to further the communist program.
2. To influence clergymen to support and advance the Party line.
3. To provide an opportunity for the dissemination of communist propaganda which promulgates and promotes the cause of communism.
4. To exploit the church's legitimate interest and participation in worthy programs and activities for communist ends.

The Communist Party, fully aware of the vital part that religion occupies in the history and life of the American people and hence recognizing the danger of a frontal assault on religion and its institutions, has devised an indirect program aimed at the penetration of our churches. In conjunction with this program, great care is taken not to attack religion or religious institutions openly in the Party press or in communist propaganda.

The Communist Party uses the technique of "boring from within" in its endeavor to gain influence in religious groups. Party instructions concerning the infiltration of religious organizations have been furnished the membership in closed membership meetings in Party districts throughout the country. Members have been instructed to affiliate with churches and religious groups for the purpose of injecting a "progressive"--for them another word for "communist"--viewpoint in their policies and activities. In this manner, communists strive to achieve support for their activities and campaigns on such matters as peace, social and economic reform, civil liberties, police "brutality," et cetera.



### Communist General Exploitation of Clergy

The American communist movement has been particularly eager, alert, and quick to capitalize on statements made by clergymen, church workers, laymen, church bodies, and religious publications if these statements happen to coincide with some facet of the Communist Party line. Such statements are widely circulated in the communist press and are cited by communist leaders as evidence of broad noncommunist support on specific issues. In this manner, communists have been especially astute in exploiting utterances on such popular issues as peace, ending nuclear bomb testing, civil liberties, racial discrimination, and social and economic reform.

The tactic of exploiting a prominent person has always been a common communist practice. As many notable and distinguished persons as possible are amassed to serve as window dressing for a communist front or campaign for the simple reason that the names of a number of clergymen, educators, scientists, writers, and other notables attached to any communist front or activity will make an impression on the unwary and the unsuspecting. The names of influential people associated with such activities are used to attract and enlist the sympathy and support of lesser and ordinary people. Prominent persons serving as sponsors, as officers, and as members of committees give such communist fronts, campaigns, and activities an outward appearance of credibility, dignity, and respectability which they would not otherwise possess. For this reason, religious leaders are regularly and assiduously solicited to act as officers and sponsors of communist enterprises and projects.

Over the years, some well-meaning, intelligent, and patriotic Americans of distinction--including clergymen--have been induced to give their names, their prestige, and often their talents to communist fronts or causes without apparently being aware of their true nature or purpose. These men and women were mostly motivated by a genuine and idealistic desire to further what they thought or had been led to believe were worthwhile and laudable social objectives and programs. These individuals were frequently too busy or too unsuspecting, or both, to investigate the nature and backing of the organization with which they had identified themselves. Even though in some cases they have known or suspected that communists were involved,



they were too unfamiliar with communist practices to realize that communists were not interested in the cause itself, but only in the way it could be twisted and used to advance communist aims and goals.

Communists are well aware that to have clergymen affiliated with communist fronts and communist causes, issue communist-conceived statements and testimonials, and sign communist-inspired petitions gives trust and respectability to such activities. There are many people who simply will not believe a clergyman could be associated with any activity that is ungodly, unjust, or undemocratic.

In the communist peace campaign, for instance, which has been waged for over a decade, communists have tried to make use of religious leaders to exploit the intense and deep yearning of people everywhere for a true and lasting peace. Peace has furnished international communism with an issue which has momentous appeal and tremendous propaganda value, for every sensible person loathes war and desires peace. In recent years, different communist-devised appeals, statements, and open letters to the President of the United States have been signed by prominent people--including a few clergymen--urging a reduction in international tensions and a peaceful settlement of differences between nations.

#### The Why

We can now see why some clergymen have been drawn into the communist sphere even though communism is an inexorable adversary of all religions and their leaders. It may be well at this point to summarize the main reasons why these clergymen have succumbed to communist appeals and blandishments. These include the ability of communists to adroitly and systematically:

1. Identify themselves with legitimate general social causes and goals in which clergymen have an active and proper interest;
2. Exploit the inherent and deep idealism of clergymen;



3. Exploit the clergy's interest in specific issues such as peace, civil liberties, equal opportunity for all, and other worthy aims;
4. Equate communist social concepts with religious social concepts. One Communist Party leader, speaking to a group of missionary students at a college, declared falsely but insistently that every clergyman who preaches social justice is working along with communists whether he cares to admit it or not;
5. Promulgate the falsehood that the early Christians lived under a system similar to that advocated by communists today;
6. Create and propagandize the myth that under communism one can better express and live a Christian life. A chairman of a Communist Party district, addressing a meeting of sixty persons of different religious faiths at a church in the suburbs of a large city, informed his audience that only communism can create the material conditions by which the ideals and aspirations of Christianity can be realized;
7. Utilize the tactic of soft-pedaling communist hostility to religion and the policy of the "outstretched hand";
8. Capitalize on eras of mutual effort such as that which prevailed during World War II when this country was an ally of the Soviet Union;
9. Establish front organizations with high-sounding and humanitarian names appealing to patriotic and social-minded clergymen. These names include such words as "American," "Democratic," "International," "Liberties," "Rights," "Labor," "Freedom," "Peace," "Justice," and "Friendship";



10. Associate themselves with some unsuspecting clergymen. In one city, a Communist Party member taught Sunday School and was active in church affairs even though she was a professed atheist. Others have been accepted as speakers before church groups. This willingness to speak is, of course, the carrying-out of Party policy for, as one communist official said recently at a closed communist meeting, where possible communists should affiliate with a church because church programs are often of an advanced type through which communists can secretly work;
11. Equate communist goals with religious goals. The propaganda here is--communism is "applied Christianity" and Christians and communists are traveling a variety of roads toward the same goal.

These reasons why some clergymen have succumbed to communist appeals and blandishments also include the fact that certain clergymen have:

1. Failed to recognize rather obvious communist propaganda in the forms of petitions, resolutions, open letters, pamphlets, articles, books, et cetera. This propaganda often centers around appeals for clemency or amnesty involving persons convicted by our courts of violations relating to espionage statutes or the Smith Act. The Smith Act makes it unlawful for anyone to knowingly or willfully teach or advocate the duty or necessity of overthrowing or destroying the government by force or violence.



2. Accepted and acted upon the mistaken notion that clergymen can work with communists toward common objectives, such as establishing a permanent peace, ending racial discrimination, \* and safeguarding civil liberties, without harming religion and strengthening communism;
3. A reluctance to oppose the totalitarianism of communism with the same resoluteness, industry, and uncompromising attitude which was very correctly and successfully directed against the totalitarianism of fascism and Nazism;
4. Confused the values of communism with those of Christianity;
5. Confused the social doctrines of Karl Marx with those of Jesus Christ. One clergyman said he had "found Christ in Marx" although he expressed doubt that Christ had ever lived. This man was tried and deposed by church authorities. Another man on the staff of a church in a large eastern city joined the Communist Party, stating he found that the teachings of the Bible are sustained by communism and for that reason was the only hope of the world;
6. Made statements and drawn conclusions relative to foreign policy, economics, and domestic politics which exceeded their field of competence;
7. The tendency, in some instances, to reject or drastically dilute the supernatural content of religion in favor of a naturalistic form of humanism which can make it difficult to take, logically, a strong stand against communism;
8. Failed to wisely balance the personal and social aspects of the Gospel;
9. Shown a proneness to join organizations without taking the time to question, analyze, and think about their real sponsorship, direction, policies, and intentions.

\*The irony here is that racial discrimination has always existed within the Communist Party, USA.



There is no easy way of identifying a communist front organization. And, while this identification and the evidence-gathering necessary to establish it should be left to duly constituted agencies of the Government, the reflective, mature citizen, before joining an organization, is surely free to ask himself such questions as:

- (a) Did the organization spring into existence literally overnight to meet a shift in the Communist Party line or a change in communist foreign policy?
- (b) Are offices of the organization located in the same building with other communist front organizations?
- (c) Is the organization sponsored and supported by individuals and organizations, themselves, known to be communist?
- (d) Are the key positions of the organizations--the executive board, secretary, educational director, editor, office staff--occupied by Communist Party members?
- (e) Does the organization present itself to be nonpartisan yet engage in political activities and causes not related to its publicly avowed purposes and objectives?
- (f) Does the organization consistently receive favorable publicity and support in the communist press?
- (g) Does the organization consistently sponsor and cooperate in causes, campaigns, demonstrations, and the like, in association or in collaboration with the Communist Party or known communist front groups?
- (h) Does the organization consistently feature, at its public meetings and functions, speakers and entertainers who are known communists or consistent supporters of communism?



- (i) Are literature, posters, tickets, et cetera, of the organization regularly on display or for sale in communist-controlled bookshops or at other places under known communist control?
- (j) Is the organization's printing done by a known communist-controlled printing establishment?
- (k) Have outstanding leaders in public life openly renounced or severed affiliation or association with the organization because they believed it to be a communist front?
- (l) Does the organization shift with and follow the Communist Party line on all occasions and at all times?
- (m) Does the organization invariably refer to satellite countries as "democracies"?
- (n) Does the organization constantly denounce the American economic system and our political structure?
- (o) Does the organization continually decry American foreign policy while always lauding that of communist nations?
- (p) Does the organization, on all occasions and at all times, confirm, support, and praise all policies and actions of communist nations?
- (q) Do the organization's avowed aims and objectives invariably parallel and conform with those of the Communist Party, USA, at all times and on all occasions?
- (r) Does the organization propound the theme of "peaceful coexistence" consistently and in the same manner as is done by communist nations?



### Extent of Communist Infiltration of Clergy

We have seen why and how communists have made continuous and persistent efforts over the years to penetrate American churches and to exploit American clergymen. But to stop here would result in conveying a totally erroneous impression as to the extent of communist infiltration of the clergy. To give an objective appraisal, it is essential to point out that the apogee of communist activity, penetration, and influence among clergymen and churches in the United States coincides with the zenith of the numerical strength, activity, and influence of the American communist movement generally. This peak was reached in the late 1930's and during and just after World War II. It was in 1944 that the Communist Party, USA, boasted of a top membership of 80,000, plus an extensive communist front apparatus.

Since the late 1940's, communist influence within the churches and among the clergy has waned along with the diminution of the Party's membership, activity, and influence on the American scene. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Communist Party, USA, has achieved any substantial success in exerting domination, control, or influence over America's clergymen or religious bodies and institutions on a national scale. The fact of the matter is that no substantial number of clergymen have been closely identified with the Communist Party over the years.

There can be no doubt as to the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the clergy to our Nation, for they have been among the most consistent and dedicated opponents of communism and all other forms of totalitarianism. J. Edgar Hoover has declared:

"We owe a debt of deep gratitude to the clergymen of this nation--men who unflinchingly battle against this conspiracy. The communists, recognizing religion as the most potent enemy, are always endeavoring to gain influence within the church. In a few instances, unfortunately, they have succeeded in influencing clergymen. However, the vast majority of our clergy are completely loyal and are resisting the attempts of the communists to delude them. To my mind, no group in America has a more key role to play in fighting communism than our clergy. Very truly they stand on the front line of this giant ideological battle."

In view of the great amount of time and money communists have spent propagandizing the American clergy, it is a remarkable tribute to them that they have resisted so successfully.



According to estimates, there are 300,000 ordained clergymen in the United States, the great majority of whom are Protestant. When this large figure is compared with the total number of clergymen who have had communist affiliations, joined communist fronts, engaged in communist activities, supported communist causes, signed communist documents, or otherwise--unwittingly or wittingly--aided and abetted the communist movement during the past four decades, the proportion is actually exceedingly small. Moreover, many of the most active, most vocal, and most publicized of these clergymen who have worked so diligently on behalf of communism do not have or never have had their own churches or congregations. Of those who did have, many were removed when their procommunist backgrounds and connections became known.

To recapitulate, it can be stated factually and without equivocation that any allegation is false which holds that there has been and is, on a national scale, an extensive or substantial communist infiltration of the American clergy, in particular the Protestant clergy. This statement applies with equal force to the Methodists as it does to other religious denominations.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that the Methodist Board of Missions in 1960 adopted a special four-year program to combat communist propaganda in various countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. The Board announced its intention of sending more missionaries to these areas, as well as increasing the output and distribution of Christian literature and widening the use of radio and television in its educational program.

While some of our citizens are highly pleased to realize that the overwhelming majority of our clergymen have steadfastly opposed communism, there are other citizens who are extremely disturbed to learn that even a few clergymen have identified themselves with communist causes. Irrespective of the view taken, we all should be greatly indebted to our clergy for the outstanding leadership and service that they have always exhibited. America's religious institutions are one of our most formidable bulwarks in the crusade against communism. The clergy occupy a vital role in the struggle between religion and communism, for their task is to inspire and develop Americans imbued with and dedicated to religious principles and democratic ideals.

In the battle that is now being waged between communism and the free world, our survival will depend on the strength, determination, and idealism engendered by our Judaeo-Christian heritage. In this global conflict, what is there that one man can do (cleric or layman) in his local community to strengthen this heritage and to counter communism?



## What One Man Should Not Do

First, let us consider what one should not do:

1. Do not speak or act in any manner that would create fear, hysteria, and confusion. These are "the ingredients for communist coups in nations which have fallen under its spell," says Mr. Hoover.
2. Do not make false charges of communism against other citizens or sow seeds of suspicion, distrust, and alarmism.
3. Do not use, unless you are capable of accurately defining, such ambiguous and misleading words and expressions as "red," "radical," "leftist," "left wing," "left-wing supporter," "socialist," "collectivist," "self-styled liberal," "rightist," "right wing," "right-wing supporter," "radical right," "reactionary," and "fascist." Such vague and obscure terms have nothing to contribute to a clear, intelligent, and objective understanding of difficult and complex social problems. Their use in the past has given rise to much of the current confusion in the field of communism and religion.
4. Do not confuse legitimate dissent with communism. Mr. Hoover gives this warning:

"Knowing what communism really is and how it operates will also help us to avoid the danger of confusing communism with legitimate dissent on controversial issues. Communism feeds on social ferment. On both the local and national levels, the Communist Party, USA, is continually exploiting social, economic, and political grievances for its own tactical purposes. For this reason, the 'Party line' will frequently coincide with the views of many noncommunists on specific issues. We must not, therefore, indiscriminately label as



communists those whose opinions on a particular question may, on occasion, parallel the official Party position. We must also guard against the tendency to characterize as communists those who merely disagree with us or who advocate unorthodox or unpopular beliefs.

"When anyone is erroneously branded a communist, it not only constitutes an injustice to the individual, but also helps communism by diffusing the strength of anticommunist forces...."

5. Do not engage in lawless vigilante action. "The job of curtailing and containing communism," Mr. Hoover admonishes, "is one for legally constituted authorities with the steadfast cooperation of every loyal citizen."
6. Do not contribute to bigotry, intolerance, and hatred of fellow human beings.
7. Do not violate or infringe upon any person's civil liberties.
8. Do not confuse theological doctrine with political principles or attempt to make one serve the cause of the other.
9. Do not attribute all our social defects, difficulties, and setbacks to communism. Mr. Hoover emphasizes: "Attributing every adversity to communism is not only irrational, but contributes to hysteria and fosters groundless fears."
10. Do not fail to oppose all individuals, regardless of their ideological posture, who would subvert our social principles and traditions. Totalitarianism in any form must be rejected.

#### What One Man Should and Can Do

Now, let us consider what one man should and can do to reaffirm and reinforce our religious tradition and to combat communism:



1. Start with oneself. Engage regularly in self-examination as a means of better understanding, developing, and applying daily the moral and religious values of our Judaeo-Christian heritage. We convince not by words but by example.
2. Study and comprehend fully our Nation's social principles, traditions, values, governmental structure, and historical goals. Relate them correctly to current local, national, and international events.
3. Elect government officials to local, state, and Federal office who possess intelligence, ability, and integrity.
4. Follow systematically the work and decisions of your elected representatives in government and let your views on important issues be known to them.
5. Understand communist thought, objectives, strategy, and tactics. As Mr. Hoover points out:

"Communism is, indeed, our paramount adversary, and it leans on its credo of invincibility and a concept of historical inevitability to accomplish its ends. The way to fight it is to study, understand it, and discover what can be done about it. This cannot be achieved by dawdling at the spring of knowledge; it can only be accomplished by dipping deeply into thoughtful, reliable, and authoritative sources of information."

6. Insist that every citizen is entitled under law to freedom of thought, expression, action, dissent, experimentation, education, and worship.



7. Join proven local institutions or establish new organizations designed to improve and strengthen the community. Participate in them regularly and effectively.
- ✓ 8. Eradicate the causes of communism in local communities. These include: (a) poverty, (b) disease, (c) illiteracy, (d) economic dislocation, (e) social injustices, (f) social discrimination, (g) political corruption, (h) educational inadequacies, (i) psychological maladjustments, (j) philosophical materialism, (k) religious anemia, and (l) moral decadence, personal and social.
9. Work steadily toward better relations between races, religions, and different social groups and between labor and management.
10. Encourage in one's local community original thinking, intellectual pioneering, and moral growth.
11. Contribute to a continuous revitalization of the religious life of the community, beginning with oneself.
12. Stimulate cultural diversity, variety, and creativity, for the unity we seek is not uniformity.
13. Help to direct individual and community thinking into constructive action replete with social vision, because it is as true today as it was centuries ago when it was stated that where there is no vision the people perish.
14. Develop and hold forth as a community goal for the young and old alike self-discipline, personal responsibility, dedication to worthy causes, loyalty to basic values, and a deep-rooted set of convictions in the inherent dignity and preciousness of every human being and the superiority of a free and open society in which every individual has an equal opportunity to achieve self-realization.



15. Recognize that while there are both permanence and change in life, there is no fixed status quo; hence, our need to understand social transitions and to control and to direct these transitions in accordance with the spiritual and moral values of the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

### The Years Ahead

The years ahead will be the most perilous yet experienced by this Nation. We are engaged in a titanic global struggle of values, means, and ends. Ultimately, either communism, with its monolithic social structure, will emerge the victor, or democracy, with its free and open society, will prevail. There can be no compromising of fundamental principles and goals between these two forces.

In this mortal conflict, national unity is one of our greatest needs. It is a time when men must see clearly the real and truly great issues involved. In doing so, they will realize the wisdom in subordinating their minor differences to what all can agree on and hold in common. This does not mean either uniformity or conformity; the dynamic interplay of ideas and values should go on with increasing vigor. But it does mean that this interplay, this exchange, ought to be conducted in the spirit voiced many years ago by a wise man who recommended: "In things essential, unity; in doubtful, liberty; in all things, charity."

This statement has a special application to religious people and their church organizations. Such people should be the very last to engage in vitriolic harangues, misstatement of facts, false accusations, and character assassination. Apart from the moral issue involved, this kind of activity weakens the religious forces of the United States which have such an important role to play in meeting and solving the communist problem.

Religion is paramount because it is the only force capable of sponsoring and maintaining a revolution which could completely overshadow and deplete the communist revolution now enveloping the world. Revolution there will be; the only question is whether it will be of the sword or of the spirit.

Communists are demonstrating that they do have strong convictions and are sure of their values, certain of their goals, and confident they can



destroy us. They proclaim without reservation that the means to this end is the external revolution, that of the sword, e.g., in Communist China, North Korea, Laos, and Cuba. Other examples can be found in the book previously referred to, Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. As that discerning scholar Charles Malik has observed:

"The Communists bring in a message. It affects the whole of human life. It provides a total interpretation. They are not afraid to be revolutionary; to say, this is good and that is bad. They are not afraid to shock and challenge the received customs and habits and ideas. They believe in something. The West does not want to be revolutionary, it does not want to shock and challenge, it is civilized, it is afraid lest it offend. Its trouble therefore may lie precisely in the fact that the content of its belief is very thin. For that which you really believe to be true and human and universal you will want to share with others, you cannot keep under a bushel. The question is whether there is a profound part of your being that you honestly feel you must share with others. The question is whether you honestly feel that you are not complete or happy so long as others are humanly incomplete, that you are not self-sufficient so long as others are miserable or subhuman, a prey to every superstition and every dark fear...."

In substance, then, there is one basic question we face: Do we have the necessary convictions, values, means, ends, and inner strength to unleash within ourselves, our local communities, our states, our Nation, and the world a continuing revolution of the spirit? Each day must be faced anew. A revolution it must be which will elevate the soul to God, transforming dynamically man's nature and thereby transforming society. Only individuals of integrity can make a community of integrity. Religion is the ultimate source of integrity. Therefore, the role it occupies can be decisive.

Will it be decisive? Or are we as a people too badly crippled by division, disbelief, confusion, aimlessness, uncertainty, and hesitancy and by

"...half-believers of our casual creeds  
Who never deeply felt, nor  
clearly will'd"?



It has been said that we have lost our sense of sin. Have we lost along with it our sense of goodness and our conviction that there is a distinction between the two?

This, I suggest, is the condition we find ourselves in today. It is the content of our crisis of faith in our values, in ourselves, and in God, the soul, and immortality, all of which make up the foundation of our way of life. This may explain Charles Malik's statement:

"...whereas international Communism believes and acts on the belief that the days of everything non-Communist are numbered, my deepest fear is that Western leadership believes no such thing with respect to Communism: my fear is that the softening-up process has reached such an advanced stage that all now believe that Communism is here to stay and that therefore the utmost they can do is to manage somehow to 'co-exist' with it...."

Whether or not this statement is entirely accurate, it does clearly accent the tremendous importance of belief in the lives of men and their social orders.

"Belief or unbelief  
Bears upon life, determines  
its whole course."

Certainly this is the crux of the issue between communism and religion.

What of the Bible: is it still an object of vital belief or only a piece of literature? Contingent upon the answer given to this question, the Bible has or does not have a relevancy to the problem of communism. In this connection, it may be well to recall that the Puritans, subject to shortcomings (as we all are), did hold a vital belief in the Bible which expressed itself socially as all real belief must do. The European scholar and theologian R. L. Bruckberger, in his book Image of America, makes this thoroughly provocative analysis of the Puritan and the Bible:



"The Puritans did not study the Bible as scholars do, as a text about which to argue. They lived the Bible. They found in the Bible their very simple certainties. God created man. He created him in His own image and likeness. He created him free and gave him dominion over nature. Furthermore, God had given men a Law, and that Law was Holy Writ. But God had also given man, first and foremost, the Natural Law, written in his heart and mind, from which it could never be effaced. Man owed obedience to God rather than to other men.

"These Biblical certainties were, to the Puritans, both mystical and practical truths, so explicit that they needed neither interpretation nor explanation. They had to be taken literally, just as they were, and acted upon. In this lay the genius of the Puritans. They made no distinction whatsoever between metaphysical and political freedom. If God created man free, it was a scandal and a sacrilege, an offense against God, to deny man his freedom in any domain, not excepting the political. This concept of political freedom, which was at the same time mystical and practical, constituted the discovery and the glory of the Puritans. That was the real foundation of their Utopia, the great, original idea which they brought into the world and upon which America still stands today. This was the basic principle of the Puritan revolution..."

We can never return to the past. And, the present never seems to be quite as simple and uncomplicated as that which time has covered. Yet, there are principles, ideas, and values which are timeless and require only a vital belief, an informed conviction, and a modern application to meet the unchanging needs of human nature. Contained within the Bible we find these: God as Creator; the source of all law, and the fountainhead of justice, beauty, truth, goodness, love, purpose, morals, faith, freedom, and inspiration.

These challenge all men of religion today. They challenge us in three different but related ways. First, we are challenged to transform ourselves personally. Second, we are challenged at the same time to revolutionize society through ourselves. Third, we are challenged to learn--as others before us have not done--from the lessons of history, the errors of



the past. The predicament we are in today is largely the result of our past decisions and our mistakes, some centuries old. Will these be corrected in the future? Once again I quote Charles Malik:

"Can the future redeem the past? I believe it can. Will the future redeem the past? That depends on four things: on depth, on wisdom, on daring, and on leadership. I believe without this high leadership daring to act in wisdom and depth the future will not learn from the past...."

What will religion in the United States contribute to these four essential ingredients of victory over communism? It is suggested that the extent of the religious contribution to these four things will largely determine the nature of the revolution which sooner or later will envelop the United States--the revolution of the sword or of the spirit.